

Creating a well thought out business plan is a must for any nonprofit organization getting started. It also helps to revisit the plan once the organization is established. It's important when writing your business plan to challenge all of your assumptions about your organization's operations.

Along these lines, here are a few example questions and issues you might consider:

1. You have been deep into the details of administration. Before writing a business plan, take a step back and reconnect with:
 - a. What's our mission? Why are we doing this? Who, specifically, are we serving? What specific need(s) are we meeting?
 - b. How many people are there in Kalamazoo County who would benefit from our services (i.e., what's your potential market)? How do we best communicate with them and their supporters?
 - c. How can we bring this positive benefit to this specific audience in the near future for a lowest cost? How would we build upon that start over the next 2 years...the next 5 years?
2. What do you envision the operation looking like in three years? Mentally walk through a "year in the life" of the organization to envision how you will:
 - a. Run your programs, recruit staff and participants, supervise, evaluate effectiveness
 - b. Conduct all fundraising activities: annual fund campaigns, grant writing, corporate donations/sponsorship
 - c. Communications and marketing to tell your story to the public, to donors, to potential participants
 - d. Manage the internal matters – staff/volunteer recruiting & hiring, manage the financial books and reporting, work with the board
 - e. See the Michigan Nonprofit Association's [Principles & Practices Guide](#) to see what areas to envision
3. If your ideal scenario is to own a building or property, you'll have many details to consider as well as costs & liabilities.
 - a. Do you have a good estimate of the annual costs of operating and maintaining the property? (land, buildings, equipment, various insurances, etc)
 - b. What feasible plan do you have for funding these costs for the first ten years?
 - c. What happens to the property if the organization terminates and you can't find a buyer? Who is liable for the ongoing costs?

A very brief overview of what's involved in a nonprofit business plan

<http://nonprofit.about.com/od/gettingstarted/tp/Elements-Of-A-Business-Plan-For-A-Nonprofit-Organization.htm>

Comprehensive look at business plan – be sure to drill down into applicable links

<http://managementhelp.org/businessplanning/index.htm>

Here is a sample business plan

<http://www.bridgespan.org/Publications-and-Tools/Strategy-Development/Sample-Nonprofit-Business-Plans.aspx#.VltTmjHF9F1>